# 2024 Annual General Meeting Report

## THE FORT

THE FOUNDATION OF RESOURCES FOR TEENS OF WEST NIAGARA

## Message From The Chair, David Vandersteen

In 2024, the FORT continued to deliver high-quality programs to youth in our communities, with x number of youth visits this year. It was a busy year, with numerous ongoing activities and the annual summer visit to Canada's wonderland. We were fortunate to receive funding from the Canada Summer Jobs program to hire three students and the Smithville centre welcomed a new programmer, who continues to provide outstanding programs to a growing number of youth visiting the centre. Fundraising was challenging in 2024, in part due to the Canada Post strike prior to Christmas, which impacted our principal fundraiser—the Christmas card campain. Despite this setback, the FORT continued to forge relationships with community supporters and donors and was successful in maintaining its strong financial base. Our success is owed not only to our excellent staff, without whom the FORT would not thrive, but also to the generosity of numerous organizations, businesses, and individuals who donated to FORT youth, including, among others, United Way Niagara, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Niagara Community Foundation, CAA Niagara, Meester Insurance, Grimsby & District Lions, Grimsby Rotary Club, Grimsby Legion, Fantasy of Trees, and the Grimsby Benevolent Fund and for West Lincoln, Kiwanis of West Lincoln, Rotary Club, Town of West Lincoln, Stanpac, and Tim Horton's Holiday Smile cookie campaign. These sponsors and local leaders are invaluable to the continuation of the FORT's ability to provide free programming to the youth of West Niagara. I sincerely thank all those member of the community who have generously supported us, often year after year, with donations, grants, and gifts-in-kind. We are thankful for the continued support that we receive from everyone.

### In this report you can expect:


- Message From the Chair
- Message From the Executive Director
- 2024 Year In Review
- 2024 Financials
- Community Impact
- FORT Support

## Message From The Executive Director, Gijs de Groot

In 2024, the FORT made meaningful progress in strengthening our operations, developing new program and resource delivery systems that better allowed staff to serve youth in West Niagara. These new strategies resulted in a significant increase in youth visitors, particularly at our Smithville centre. Despite the challenges of an emerging economic downturn, the FORT pivoted successfully by building on community and corporate partnerships and introducing new fundraising strategies to maintain our momentum.

This year also brought unexpected obstacles, including the Canada Post Labor Strike which forced the cancellation of our 2024 Holiday Card Campaign. We are very thankful to the West Niagara community for being so unbelievably generous during the holiday season and allowing us to fundraise so effectively. Our heartfelt thanks to Smithville Tim Hortons, Rotary Club of Grimsby, the Zwart Family, Ophardt Hygiene, Royal Canadian Legion Branch #127 and Niagara Community Foundation and their Endowment Programs for their continued support and belief in our programs and mission.

As an organization, the FORT looks forward to 2025 and continuing to make impactful change in the lives of youth in West Niagara.

## 2024 Board of Directors

Agnes Sztanko
*Chair of the Board*

Michele Dawn-Kubias
*Treasurer*

Sarah Parker
*Secretary*

Rick Morrison
*Member*

Beth Shaw
*Member*

## 2024 Staff

Beth Shaw
*Executive Director*

Gijs de Groot
*Resource Developer*

Liz Bond
*Grimsby Program Coordinator*

Alexandrea McDonald
*Smithville Program Coordinator*

Gavin Barker
*Program Assistant*

## 2024 Year In Review - Major Income

**Zwart Family**
$25,000.00

**Grimsby Benevolent Fund**
$7,500.00

**Niagara Community Foundation**
$12,171.69

**Tim Hortons**
$8,596.75

**Happening in Grimsby**
$7,384.99

**Royal Canadian Legion Branch #127**
$10,000.00

**St. John's Presbyterian Church**
$3,000.00

**Ophardt Hygiene**
$2,500.00

## 2024 Financials

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|---|---|
| **Revenue** | $297,003.00 |
| **Expenses** | $323,001.00 |
| **Net Income End Of Year** | **$(25,998.00)** |

**2024 Programs**

**314 Unduplicated Clients Served**

**Reflecting on a Year of Community Impact:**
**Thank you to all who supported The FORT in 2024**

NCF NIAGARA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

United Way

Ontario Trillium Foundation

Thank you for reading!

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